

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE OR SEPARATION OF RELIGION AND STATE

As a subject of controversy, the problem shakes the very foundation of democratic ideals. Here is an intriguing account of the dilemma which democracies face.

by
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One of the strongest points of Masonry has been the willingness to seek out and recognize truth and light wherever found. It is also recognized that a truth once found can be lost through violence, neglect, or obscurity.

There is a vital truth that is being lost through obscurity. While it is no one's fault—, it is still slipping from our grasp. As workmen we must be willing to pay the price of honest industry to keep truth ever in the open that all may see and be enlightened.

I speak concerning the Christian Church, the Constitution and the State. There is a slogan in which we say we believe, but its meaning is obscure. The slogan is "Separation of Church and State." First of all the slogan does not say which church. Some would say it means the Roman Church. If this be so then so let us state. Others would say that "church" is a general term. In this connection it is important to note it is customary today to refer to the Christian church but the Judaic, Hindi or Buddhist religion. Therefore, if church is a

general term, modern usage limits its meaning to Christianity. This being so, it would be discrimination against the Christian church and would leave the way open for the togetherness of Judaism and the State, Hinduism and the State, Buddhism and the State, Materialism and the State, and so on.

Secondly, we must turn to the Constitution for our source of material. In the Bill of Rights we find this statement pertaining to religion and the state, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ."

During the colonial period the Church of England was the established church. A number of free church people were persecuted because they did not wish to submit to Church of England and to support it financially. After our independence was won and the Constitution was framed, the ten amendments or Bill of Rights had to be added to the Constitution before the colonies would ratify it.

The statement "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ." was added to be sure that no one religion would be forced upon the people and that the state would not keep a man from worshipping as he felt he should. To be true to the Constitution and to Masonry we must treat all religions alike. Therefore, we must join the writers of the Bill of Rights and use as our slogan "The Separation of Religion and State."

This brings us to our third point: the State. The State is to provide orderly and just government for all its citizens. The State is not to control, dictate, establish, or prohibit the free exercise of religion. Nor is religion to control or dictate to the State.

May we ever remember, while it is good that the State should not control religion and religion should not control the State, let us not forget that God should control both.

Ed. Note. The foregoing article is reprinted from *The New Age*, November 1960, pp. 29 & 30. In the *Free Press*, December 3, 1960, pp. 22 & 24, Diokno Manlavi writes an account of the establishment of the Republic of Luchuan, near Cuyo, Palawan, in 1899. The petite, short-lived republic was established by Don Casiano Padon, a native of Molo, Iloilo, who was its first and only president. His purpose was to have a government completely free from Spain, the Philippine republic of Aguinaldo, and the United States. All went well in the government until Padon decided to have his "republic" build a church which was opposed by the legislature and the people. So strong was the opposition that Padon fled with his family to Iloilo and thus, for the second time, the attempt to join the Church and the State in the Philippines was frustrated. It will be recalled that when the Malolos Constitution was framed in 1897, the delegates voted to have separation.

DECLARATION OF THE FREE

—oOo—

We have no falsehood to defend,
 We want the facts;
 Our force, our thought, we do not spend
 In vain attacks.
 And we will never try
 To save fair and pleasing lie.
 The simple truth is what we ask,
 Not the ideal;
 We have set ourselves the noble task
 To find the real.
 If all there is, is naught but dress
 We want to know and hear our loss.
 We will not willingly be fooled,
 By fables nursed;
 Our hearts, by earnest thought, are
 schooled
 To bear the worst.
 And we can stand erect and dare
 All things, all facts, that really are.
 We have no god to serve or fear,
 No hell to shun,
 No devil with malicious leer.
 When life is done,
 An endless sleep may close our eyes
 A sleep with neither dreams nor sighs.
 We have no master on the land—
 No King in air—
 Without a monocle we stand
 With a prayer, but
 Without a fear of coming night,
 We seek the truth, we love the light.
 We do not bow before a guess,
 A vague unknown;
 A senseless force we do not bless
 In solemn tone.
 When evil comes we do not curse
 Or thank because it is no worse.
 When cyclones rend—when lightning
 blights,
 T'is naught but fate;
 There is no God of wrath Who smites
 In heartless hate.
 Behind the things that injure man
 There is no purpose, thought or plan.
 We waste no time in useless dread,
 In trembling fear;